

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SAJ-01 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 FAA-00 /071 W

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R 231040Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 235

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KABUL

GUSBKR/AMCONSUL KARACHI 3078

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL LAMOGUE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 4672

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN

SUBJ: INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS- CIVIL AIR IMPASSE

REF: ISLAMABAD 4651

SUMMARY: MFA OFFICER PROVIDED FURTHER DETAILS ON INDO-PAK DISCUSSIONS, REITERATING FOREIGN SECRETARY'S DISAPPOINTMENT AT FAILURE TO BREAK CIVIL AVIATION IMPASSE, WHICH HE BLAMED ON INDIAN INTRANSIGENCE AND INFLEXIBILITY. HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH SALAL DAM DECISION, RESOLUTION OF PROPAGANDA PROBLEM, AND ATMOSPHERE OF TALKS. HE SPECULATED THAT REASON INDIANS CONTINUE TO BALK AT RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IS THAT ONCE THIS HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED NEXT STEP IN SIMLA PROCESS WOULD BE DISCUSSION OF KASHMIR, WHICH HE FELT GOI NOT WILLING TO UNDERSTAKE
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UNTIL IT HAD CONSOLIDATED ITS POLITICAL POSITION IN STATE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A DISCUSSION WITH ECON AND POL COUNSELORS ON MAY 22, MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL (SOUTH ASIA) HAYAT MEHDI PROVIDED INFORMATION AND VIEWS ON THE MAY 15 - 20 INDO-PAK TALKS WHICH SUPPLEMENT THOSE PASSED TO THE AMBASSADOR BY FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAHI EARLIER THAT DAY (REFTEL).

2. MEHDI ECHOED SHAHI'S DEEP DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE FAILURE OF THE TWO SIDES TO BREAK THE IMPASSE ON THE CIVIL AVIATION ISSUE. HE MAINTAINED THAT THE GOP HAD ENTERED THE DISCUSSIONS FULLY DETERMINED HAT THEY WOULD LEAD TO AN AGREEMENT TO RESUME OVERFLIGHTS AND AIR LINKS, AND RECALLED HIS EARLIEG COMXIDENCE THAT SUCCESS WAS IN THE OFFING. PAKS HAD FROM THE START OF THE TALKS DECLARED THAT ISSUE WAS A POLITICAL ONE WHICH HAD TO BE DEALT WITH AS SUCH, AND THE GOI'S INFLEXIBLE, LEGALISTIC APPROACH, AS MEHDI DESCRIBED IT, CAME AS A SHOCK AMD SUGPRISE, PARTICULARLY WMEN IT WAS PUT FORTH BY FOREIGN SECRETARY KEWAL SINGH, WHOM THE PAKS MAD REGARDED AS ONE OF MOST REASONABLE INDIAN NEGOTIATORS THEY HAVE DEALT WITH.

3. MEHDI OUTLIMED THE VARIOUS CNCESIONS THE VAKS HAD BEEN PREPARED TO MAKE TO BGING ABOUT A BREAKTHROUGH. AS HE EXPLAINED THE GOP POSITION, THEPAKS WERE PREPARED TO HAVE A TEVHNCIAL COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED TO DISCUSS CLAIMS AND COUNTERCLAIMS BUT WITHOUT ANX SERIOUS EXPECTATION THAT IT WOULD EVER COME TO ANY AGREED CONCLUSION. IN THE MEANTIME, AIR LINKS AND OVERFLIGHTS WOULD BE RESUMED. ALTHOUGH THE PAKS COULD NOT AGREE TO WITHDRAWAL OF THE CASE FROM TME ICAO, THEY WERE PREPARED AS A FINAL CONCESSION TO HAVE THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE DISCUSS THAT QUESTION AS WELL. THEY TOLD THE INDIANS THAT AS LONG AS EITHER SIDE FELT THERE WAS "THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE" THAT A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE SETTLEMENT COULD BE REACHED, THEY WOULD NOT ACTIVATE TME CASE BEFORE THE ICAO. THIS GOP WILLINGNESS TO LET THE ISSUE OF TME CLAIMS AND COUNTERCLAIMS STEMMING
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FROM THE 1971 HIJACKING DRIFT, PRESUMABLY ENDLESSLY, WHILE RESUMING CIVIL AIR TRAFFIC PATTERNS AND PUTTING THEICAO CASE INTO DEEP FREEZE WENT UNHEEDED, ACCORDING TO MEHDI. THE ONLY CONCESSION THE GOI WAS PREPARED TO MAKE, HE SAID, WAS THE MEANINGLESS SUGGESTION THAT THE PAKS AGREE IN WRITING (NOT ORALLY) TO "DISCONTINUE" RATHER THAN "WITHDRAW" THE CASE FROM ICAO.

4. MEHDI SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THE INFLEXIBLE INDIAN

ATTITUDE STEMMED FROM (1) A GOI VIEW THAT PAK AGREE-MENT TO WITHDRAW THE CASE FROM ICAO WOULD REPRESENT A VINDICATION OF THE ACTIONS THE INDIANS TOOK FOLLOWING THE 1971 HIJACKING INCIDENT, (2) A REITERATION OF THE GOI POSITION THAT ALL ISSUES BE RESOLVED BILATERALLY, AN ARRANGEMENT OBVIOUSLY TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE BIGGER POWER, AND (3) A DESIRE ON THE INDIANS' PART TO DEMONSTRATE BY THE FAILURE OF TALKS THAT THIS WAS THE RESULT OF GOP INTRANSIGENCE PROMPTED BY THE RESUMPTION OF THE SALE OF US MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO PAKISTAN.

5. MEHDI REITERATED SHAHI'S SATISFACTION WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE DISCUSSIONS ON THE SALAL DAM AND ON PROPAGANDA. HE SAID THAT THE MATTER OF RAIL LINKS HAD BEEN RAISED BY THE INDIANS, THE PAKS HAD REPLIED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE, BUT NOTHING FURTHER ON THIS WAS DISCUSSED. HE WAS SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE IN DISCUSSING WHY THEY HAD RAISED THE ISSUE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN LIGHT OF THEIR OFTEN REITERATED EARLIER DETERMINATION TO WAIT FOR AN INDIAN INITIATIVE. THIS MATTER, HE SAID, HAD ONLY COME UP "IN PASSING". HE SPECULATED THAT THE REASON THE INDIANS CONTINUE TO BALK AT RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS IS THAT ONCE THIS HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED THE NEXT STEP IN THE SIMLA PROCESS WOULD BE DISCUSSION OF KASHMIR. HE THOUGHT THE GOI WISHED MORE TIME TO CONSOLIDATE ITS POLITICAL POSITION IN THE STATE (FOLLOWING THE ACCESSION OF SHEIKH ABDULLAH) BEFORE EMBARKING ON SUCH TALKS. HE CONFIRMED THAT THE KASHMIR ISSUE ITSELF HAD NOT COME UP IN DISCUSSIONS.

6. MEHDI CONFIRMED THAT THE TALKS WERE HELD IN A
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FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE DESPITE THE INTRANSIGENT INDIAN LINE ON THE CIVIL AIR ISSUE/K HE NOTED THAT AMONG THE INDIAN NEGOTIATORS SENT SECRETARY ASHOK CHIB MAD TAKEN A VERY HARD LINE BOTH IN FORMAL AND PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS. HE SAID NEXT ROUND -- HE MENTIONED AGMA SHAHI'S SUGGESTED TIMETABLE IN THIS CONTEXT--WOULD TAKE PLACE IN ISLAMABAD.

7. MEHDI WAS RUSHED AND TIRED AND WE DID NOT GET MUCH OF A CHANCE TO GET INTO OTHER ASPECTS OF THE TALKS WITH HIM. WE EXPECT TO BE MEETING HIM AGAIN IN NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS AND WILL PROBE MORE DEEPLY INTO THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ISSUE MENTIONED IN NEW DELHI 6833 (NOT RECEIVED HERE AT TIME OF OUR SESSIONS WITH EITHER SHAHI OR MEHDI).
BYROAD

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